

**December 26, 2014**

**RECIPE: Stuffed Pork Chops**

Large Pork Chops filled with a Pecan Bread Stuffing and topped with a light Cream Gravy

Servings: 4

- 14 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, large, diced fine
- 1 cup celery, diced fine
- 1/4 cup smoked ham, diced fine
- 3 tablespoons bourbon whiskey
- 1 cup bread crumbs, fresh, toasted
- 4 tablespoons pecans, chopped
- 1 teaspoon thyme, dried
- 1/4 teaspoon lemon juice, fresh
- salt and pepper, to taste<br>
- 4 pork chops, bone in, 1 1/4" thick
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon, powdered
- 2 cups hot water
- 8 ounces cream
- several toothpicks

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Stuffing: Melt 6 tbsp butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Add 1/2-cup onions, 1/3-cup celery and the ham. Cook slowly, stirring, for about 10 minutes, or until vegetables are soft, but not at all brown. Add bourbon to the pan, raise heat to high, and boil the liquor down, stirring until it practically disappears. Remove from heat and stir in bread crumbs, pecans, 1/2 tsp thyme, and lemon juice. Taste and season carefully with salt and pepper; the stuffing should be strongly flavored and rather salty.

Trim off almost all of the fat from the edges of the pork chops. Cut a deep horizontal pocket in each chop, reaching all the way to the rib bone. Divide stuffing evenly between the chops, placing the stuffing into the slits in the pork chops. Close up the edges of the chops using the toothpicks.

Melt 3 tbsp of butter in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the pork chops and cook until thoroughly browned on one side, turn and brown the second side. Remove chops from pan.

Add the 2 additional tbsp of butter, lower heat, and add 2/3-cup onions and 1/3-cup celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, until softened but not brown. Add 1 tbsp of flour and cook, stirring for 1 minute.

Mix the powdered chicken bouillon with the 2 cups hot water and whisk, slowly, 1 cup of the chicken bouillon into the flour-vegetable mixture. Raise the heat to medium-high and cook, stirring to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Stir in 1/2 tsp thyme, 1/4 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp white pepper.

Return the pork chops to the pan and add enough remaining bouillon to reach 1/3 of the way up the sides of the pork chops. Baste the pork chops with the liquid. Bring to a fast simmer, then turn heat way down until the liquid barely bubbles. Cover with a tight fitting lid and cook for 1-1/2 to 2 hours, basting with the liquid every 20 minutes until chops are tender.

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Blend 2 tbsp of flour with 2-1/2 tbsp soft butter to make a paste.

Remove chops from pan and place in storage containers. Bring the gravy to a fast simmer. Add the butter-flour mixture, one teaspoon at a time, to thicken the gravy, adding only enough to bring to a gravy consistency. Simmer for 3 minutes. Then add 1/2 to 1 cup of the cream, as desired, and continue to cook 5 to 10 minutes until the gravy re-thickens.

Let cool. Pour gravy over chops in containers, cover and store in the refrigerator.

Reheating instructions:

Place chops and gravy in an ovenproof casserole, cover tightly and heat in 350-degree oven approximately 30 to 40 minutes until heated throughout.

